

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4315**

April 6, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

I write with grave concern regarding the Administration's inaction to replenish the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) after the sell down of crude oil conducted to relieve oil prices that increased after Russia invaded Ukraine.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has yet to show any indication that it is prepared to give credible effect to the President Biden's commitment to repurchase crude oil when prices of the West Texas Intermediate (WTI) are at or below about \$62 to \$72 per barrel. WTI crude futures fell to around \$70 per barrel the week of March 20, 2023. The lack of urgency to address this matter, and ongoing depletion of the SPR is worrisome to say the least.

Likewise, the surprise announcement that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC countries (OPEC+) – plan to cut oil production by more than 1.6 million barrels per day starting in May through the end of the year – is of great concern. These production cuts are expected to increase prices at the pump and further drive-up inflation. According to Goldman Sachs analysts, Brent crude futures are predicted to increase to \$95 a barrel by the end of this year. By midday Monday, April 3, 2023, Brent crude jumped 5.31 percent to \$84.13 per barrel, while WTI rose 5.48 percent to \$79.83. We should fully expect conditions to worsen before they get better. In order to mitigate the effects of inflation, the Federal Reserve could increase interest rates resulting in a cascading effect.

It is clear your Administration has missed its chance to repurchase crude oil at a low price, as promised. Failing to replenish the SPR is a matter of national security and has paved the way for OPEC+ to manage the oil cycle undermining domestic producers and wasting a powerful non-monetary tool to fight inflation.

With these concerns in mind, I request a formal response to the following questions:

1. On March 23, 2023, U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm testified before Congress, at a House Committee on Appropriations hearing, that it would be difficult to take advantage of low prices to repurchase crude oil and replenish the SPR when the barrel price dropped below \$72 and would continue to look for "that low price" to save

taxpayer dollars. The WTI crude futures fell around \$70 per barrel in mid-March. What does the Administration determine to be “that low price” needed to repurchase crude oil?

2. How long does the Administration anticipate it would take to repurchase the 180-million-barrel sale that drove the level of the stockpile to its lowest since 1983?
3. I understand that two of the four reserve sites, Bryan Mound in Texas and Bayou Choctaw in Louisiana, require maintenance and are currently undergoing life extension work. When does the Administration anticipate completion of this work?

I encourage you to promptly follow through on your promise to repurchase crude oil to replenish the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and answer the above questions. I appreciate your attention to this matter – which is of critical importance for the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VG' followed by a stylized flourish.

Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

CC: U.S. Secretary of Energy, Jennifer Granholm, U.S. Department of Energy